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## **HOUSE APPROVES \$500,000 TO HELP EXPAND THE BRIDGE COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC, OBEY SAYS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) announced today that the U.S. House of Representatives has approved his request for \$500,000 in federal funding to help expand the Bridge Community Health Clinic in Wausau, including additional dental care and new mental health services.

“With rising costs making it more difficult for people to

get the basic health care they need, community-based health centers, like the Bridge Clinic, help provide affordable care to thousands of Wisconsin residents who might otherwise go without," said Obey, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Education. "Like the folks who work at the Bridge Clinic, I believe that health care is a right that everyone deserves and I'm glad the House approved my request to help the clinic grow so it can serve more people."

Obey requested the federal funds as part of the FY2008 Labor, Health, Education Appropriations bill. The Bridge Clinic is a Federally Qualified Health Clinic that has been serving the community since 1995. Last year, the Clinic saw approximately 5,000 patients in 18,000 encounters.

Noting that "we're facing a 'silent epidemic' of oral disease in this country because of a lack of available dental

care, especially in rural areas and for the most vulnerable among us," Obey said he is especially pleased that the clinic wants to expand its dental health program. "Lack of dental care is no small problem. Children have died because of infections brought on by the absence of dental service," he added.

"The Labor, Health, Education Appropriations measure must still be approved by the Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law," Obey concluded. "But having these funds included in the House approved version means a major hurdle has been cleared."

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